

Acts 1:1-14 (NRSV)
Text Analysis Study Sheet

Luke's gospel also starts with a prologue or dedication, containing similar elements.

¹Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were **eyewitnesses** and servants of the word, ³ I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent **Theophilus**, ⁴ so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. - Luke 1:1-4

Theophilus: the name means God (*theos*) Lover (philos): "God-loving; :friend of God" or "Loved of God". Is this a real person? Does the name indicate some sort of metaphorical or narrative character as representative of all disciples?

all that Jesus did and taught: Luke is insisting upon the beginning not just about biography (actions) but also teachings (sayings).

H.O.L.Y. S.P.I.R.I.T.: the Spirit is introduced from the beginning as the principal character as this part of the story. Don't forget that the word translated as Holy (*hagios*) can also mean good, healthy or whole. The word translated as Spirit (*pneuma*) can also mean ghost, breath and wind.

Verse 3 is a sort of *flashback* to the passion and the baptism of Jesus by John: a backwards look in order to then remember and claim what is to come.

the kingdom of God: this was a reoccurring theme, the dominant one, in the teachings of Jesus. The word Kingdom (*basileia*) can be translated as "rule" "dominion" "reign". It implies both geographical and temporal dominion.

Some examples include:

"But [Jesus] said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." - Luke 4:43

"Soon afterwards [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him," - Luke 8:1
----continued on next page of notes

¹In the first book, **Theophilus**, I wrote about *all that Jesus did and taught* from the beginning ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the **H.O.L.Y. S.P.I.R.I.T.** to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about **the kingdom of God**. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John BAPTIZED with water, but you will be BAPTIZED with the **H.O.L.Y. S.P.I.R.I.T.** not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

⁸ But you will receive power when the **H.O.L.Y.**
S.P.I.R.I.T. has come upon you; and you will be my

witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, **a sabbath**

day's journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together *with certain women*, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

On the **the kingdom of God:**

"When the crowds found out about it, they followed [Jesus]; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured." - Luke 9:11

ΒΑΠΤΙΖΕΙΝ: (baptizo) in Greek means 1. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk) 2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe 3. to overwhelm (as in to drown and/or die)

witnesses : (martus or martyr) : a witness; an eye- or ear-witness who gives evidence, testifies, or gives a good report in word, action and presence. It came to mean martyr in the sense that those martyred for faith in Jesus were the ultimate good witnesses, up unto and through death.

The proclamation of Jesus | He insists upon three things: 1). No human knows the timing of the eschatological future to come, God alone does. 2). The disciples will speak in the place of Jesus from here on out, they will be the actors in the time that is opening up. They will receive a power, legitimacy, spirit-guidance in order to be witnesses and martyrs. 3). This testimony will be world-wide, starting in Jerusalem the capital and "home" of their people, spreading beyond cultural norms, parameters and tribes to encompass all the earth. Some see this phrase in verse 8 as a sort of outline of the settings to come to in the book Acts.

The word power in Greek is (*dynamis*) from which we get our words dynamic, dynamo and dynamite.

a sabbath day's journey: this is reminiscent of the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus who encounter Jesus as he breaks the bread. That episode starts with: Now on that same day [the Sabbath] two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles (Greek sixty stadia) from Jerusalem. This distance had been designated by the rabbis who had interpreted the length of walking possible on the Sabbath (before it became considered "work" to be the circumference of the city of Jerusalem which you may need to cross to go from home to worship at the Temple.

with certain women: Luke emphasizes the role of women as essential in the developing community of disciples from the beginning. This both-gendered community is centered around the biological and spiritual family (apostles) of Jesus; expanding outward as we'll see from the next verse onward....to include us today.

QUESTIONS:

1. As you study the text what seems to be important for the author to convey?
2. How does the text make you look backwards to the gospel, and forwards to the future?
3. What questions does it leave you with?